

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 L-03 AID-05 IGA-02 MCE-00
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15 ACDA-12 EB-08 TRSE-00
OMB-01 EUR-12 COME-00 /081 W
-----117515 112326Z /64

R 111442Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8876

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 0260

DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA (COLONEL THOMAS)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, IT, BL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED SALE OF ARMORED TROOP CARIERS TO BOLIVIA

REF: ROME 097

1. WE HAVE VERIFIED THAT THE OTO-MELARA COMPANY IN A NOVEMBER 23, 1977 LETTER TO THE GOB DID OFFER TO SELL THEM 170 M-113 APC'S. TO DATE NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO BUY. WE DO NOT EXPECT A DECISION UNTIL AFTER BOLIVIAN ARMY COLONEL GUIDO OCAMPO RETURNS FROM A PLANNED TRIP IN FEBRUARY TO THE US. ONE REASON OCAMPO IS GOING TO WASHINGTON IS TO LOOK INTO THE PURCHASE OF APPROXIMATELY 22 M-48 TANKS.

2. THE BOLIVIAN ARMY IS ONLY STUDYING THE ITALIAN OFFER (FOR 100 APC'S ONLY) AND WE FEEL THAT THE PROPOSAL HAS NOT REACHED THE ARMY COMMANDER'S DESK FOR A DECISION. TO DATE THE MILITARY HAVE BEEN HELD IN TIGHT REIN ON THEIR ARMS PURCHASES BY PRESIDENT BANZER AND IN GENERAL HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO PURCHASE ONLY THAT TYPE OF EQUIPMENT USED IN NATION BUILDING OR WHICH CAN BE USED TO EARN THE INCOME TO
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COVER ITS COST. CONSEQUENTLY, WE FEEL THAT THERE IS A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT THE GOB WILL NOT PURCHASE THE APC'S.

3. IN RESPONSE TO THE ROME MESSAGE, WE WOULD RECOMMEND A NONCOMMITAL REPLY. NEITHER WASHINGTON APPROVAL NOR DISAPPROVAL OF THE ITALIAN OFFER NOW WOULD SERVE US INTERESTS. WE FEEL NEITHER IS NEEDED AT THIS POINT WHEN THE GOB HAS YET

TO APPROACH US. DISAPPROVAL WILL ADVERSELY IMPACT OUR RELATIONS
AND GET THE AMOUR PROPRE OF THE ARMY ENGAGED IN A TRANSACTION
BANZER IS LIKELY TO VETO ANYWAY. APPROVAL CLEARS THE WAY
FOR AN ITALIAN FIRM TO UNLEASH ALL ITS ARM-TWISTING FORCES
ON THE GOB, THUS MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR BANZER TO TURN
DOWN THE PURCHASE.
BOEKER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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